

“The Good Gift-Giver”

By Mrs. Sojourner



My mother can do most things she puts her mind to, but there are some things she is exceptional at doing. One of those is choosing gifts. Growing up, her nieces and nephews particularly enjoyed getting gifts from her because she kept her "ear to the ground," so to say, to learn what they liked, needed or wanted and picked something that was just perfect for them.

Our Heavenly Father is also a good Gift-Giver. He loves us and knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what gifts are best for each of us.

Sometimes God gives people gifts they do not want, but in the end it turns out that our all-knowing God gave them what they needed irregardless of whether they wanted it or not.

Gideon was given the gift of anointing to lead Israel into battle against the Midianites. (Judges 6-8) He did not want to do this, but God made it clear that He was sending Gideon and had given Gideon everything he

Notes:

[a]

needed to do the task before him. Gideon did not want to use his gifts and lead Israel against Midian, but when he stepped out and trusted God, the Good Gift-Giver, he and Israel were victorious.

If you have gifts that you either do not want to use, or are afraid to use, please remember that our Heavenly Father is the Good Gift-Giver. He purposely chose to give you the gifts you have and he has a specific reason he gave you those gifts. Trust God and his reasons. If you do not know how to use those gifts, ask God for guidance in how to use your gifts, and in your Bible reading look for passages that apply to your gifts. When God presents you with opportunities to use them, step forth with confidence in God and what he has given you.

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Sojourning

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...with The Sojourner

“Grace, Time, Place” (Teaching Sketch)

Luke 2:1-7



When God blesses mankind it is an act of grace. Grace, when applied to the Believer, reaches far beyond the common grace experienced by all people.

A Time For Grace

God has set times for which he will do certain things. When Jesus was born God was setting into motion the events which must take place for the “Age of Grace” to be ushered in for the salvation of mankind. Jesus came at the precise time he was to come. Jesus was tempted, just as each of us, and yet did not sin during his time as a man. These events in his life permitted him to be the only person who could defeat the Devil and rightfully restore both the relationship of God to man and allow man to again have dominion over the earth as was once the case.

Please note that while the time had arrived for Jesus to be born it was ungodly men

who God used to bring about the fulfilling of what had been foretold hundreds of years before.

When Jesus was born it was outside of the normal place for people to abide. This was not because Joseph was poor, he had the ability to stay in the inn, but because there was no room for God among the people. Mankind had drifted far from God! When the time came the one who would bring and establish grace came.

A Place For Grace

Jesus not only came when he was to come but where he was to come as had been prophesied. Joseph took Mary from a place Nazareth, which means “separated,” to a place called Bethlehem, which means “house of bread,” to have the baby Jesus, which means “savior,” who was to be the bread of life! Take notice that after Mary had Jesus she placed him in a wrap of clothes and

Notes:

- [1] Bethlehem - House of Bread
- [2] Mary - rebellion
- [3] Galilee - circle
- [4] Nazareth - separated
- [5] Joseph - increase
- [7] David - well-beloved
- [8] Jesus—savior

Please note: This is a teaching sketch only and not the complete teaching.

Scripture:

Luke 2:1-7 (NIV)

The Birth of Jesus

1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to his own town to register. 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.



Advent

This is the third week in Advent. This is the week (re-light 1st two candles) we light the:

Bethlehem Candle

Saying:

"I light the Bethlehem Candle which reminds us Mary and Joseph went to the City of David to be taxed and fulfill the prophecy of old that the Savior was to be born in Bethlehem."

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-7

Song:

"O' Little Town of Bethlehem"

"Grace, Time, Place" (Teaching Sketch)

Luke 2:1-7

placed him in a manger, which is a place of feeding and nourishment. Jesus, from this small place, would feed the world the bread of life.

Size Does Not Matter

It matters not the size of the town, barn, or manger because when God does a thing it is always just right!

Mankind does not see things as God sees them. Mankind gives a great deal of attention to the size of something, be it a town, a house, a family, a fortune, or a following. God sees these matters a trivial by comparison! God looks at faithfulness. Mary and Joseph both had doubts and concerns which brought them to that little overcrowded town with no place to stay. It is not hard to imagine what the talk must have been on that night in Bethlehem. Perhaps the talk was about big crowds, big money, or big taxes. The talk was certainly about a little family in a stable. What the crowd would have spoken of was what they understood but certainly not about the greatest event since the creation or the flood. Grace would change everything from that time and place!

Just so you'll know:

Our service is informal. We look to the Holy Spirit of God to guide us corporately and individually.

Our service usually follows this general pattern:

- **Informal sharing** of what we have seen the Lord do in, through, and around us since we last met.
 - Testimonies are often a part of the conversation.
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Praise & Worship**
- **Words of Prophecy or Knowledge** if they have been given during "Praise & Worship" (other times as the Spirit moves).
- **The Pastoral Message**
- **Prayer Requests**
 - Ministry to those present & intercession.
- **The Blessing**

